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ABSTRACT

Based on "Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo" by Zlata Filipovic, this lesson plan presents activities designed to help students understand that historical drama, like other historical fiction, is rooted in history but contains imaginary elements as well; and that the author describes in her diary what it was like to be a teenager in Sarajevo during the conflict there. The main activity of the lesson involves students working in groups to adapt scenes from the book into a one-act play. It includes objectives, materials, procedures, adaptations, discussion questions, evaluation methods, extension activities, annotations of suggested readings and web links, vocabulary, and related academic standards and benchmarks addressed in the lesson plan. The lesson plan also contains a description of a video clip related to the lesson, comprehension questions related to the video clip, and answers to those comprehension questions. (RS)

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TITLE OF LESSON PLAN:

Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation

LENGTH OF LESSON: Two class periods

GRADE LEVEL: 9-12

SUBJECT AREA: World History

CREDIT: Beth Lemberger, history teacher, Owen Brown Middle School, Rockville, Maryland.

OBJECTIVES: Students will understand the following:

1. Historical drama, like other historical fiction, is rooted in history but contains imaginary elements as well.

2. Zlata Filipovic describes in her diary what it was like to be a teenager in Sarajevo during the conflict there.

MATERIALS:
For this lesson, you will need:

Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo by Zlata Filipovic, published in the United States in 1995 and available in many libraries and bookstores

Computer with Internet access

PROCEDURE:

1. Discuss with students what they know about the drama called *The Diary of Anne Frank*—either the older play produced originally in the 1950s or the newer play produced in the 1990s. If students do not know that both plays are based on Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl,* explain so. Go on to mention the newer play uses materials from a version of the diary that had not been released, translated, and published in the United States until the 1990s.

2. Make sure students understand that although the diary itself is a nonfiction account of a teenager's life in hiding during the Nazi Holocaust, the playwrights have taken liberties in their stage version and overlaid the historical facts with imaginary details.

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3. Introduce to students the 1995 book *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo* by Zlata Filipovic, who began the book when she was 11 and found herself in a war-torn land. The book received excellent reviews and is available in many libraries and bookstores. The point you want to get across at this stage is that many readers have compared Zlata's diary with Anne's and that it lends itself to dramatization the same way that Anne Frank's diary did.

4. Give some students a chance to familiarize themselves with Zlata's book and to report to the rest of the class on how the content and style of Zlata's book compare and contrast with the content and style of Anne's.

5. Challenge students, working in groups, to find an entry or two in Zlata's account that they would like to adapt to a one-act play. Advise them to consider a part of the diary that deals with a particularly emotional disclosure by Zlata.

6. Direct each group to review multiple reference sources (primary and secondary) to learn more about facts of daily life in Bosnia during the war and about the cause for the tensions that have lasted so many years. Many up-to-date Web sites post overviews of the situation and provide general background. Suggest students check World, which has links to recent articles by American and British correspondents who focus on real people and to ABC News's helpful site "A Beginner's Guide to the Balkans." If necessary, help groups to determine which group member should scour which reference source. All members should then report back to the group, which will, by consensus, determine what details from what they've read would help to flesh out the entry or two by Zlata that they've picked as the basis of their dramatization.

7. Go over with the class the following important elements of a one-act play:

- The script must contain both dialogue and stage directions.
- A one-act play usually deals with a single conflict and occurs in a single setting.
- As one or more characters try to solve the conflict, the act builds to a climax. Then the play shows the characters' reactions to the climax and moves on to a final outcome.
- A play based on a historical event must stick to some historical facts but can also include fictional details—especially dialogue but also actions.

8. In a series of minilessons, as detailed below, review with students how to proceed from prewriting the act, through writing, to revising and editing. Give the groups time to apply each minilesson.

PREWRITING

- In addition to a main character, Zlata, the act needs at least one other character—a friend or foe of the main character. In this case, the other character may also be from the journal entry, may be based on a person students have read about elsewhere, or may even be an imaginary character.

- The characters need to have a conflict between themselves or with someone else or something else. Ask the students to recall and/or imagine conflicts involving their characters—either real-life problems they faced or problems that the group decides the characters *might* have faced.

- Selecting one of those problems, each group should think about and prepare notes on how the characters will respond to the problem and how the problem will be solved.

- Each group should imagine how its characters look (including how they dress), sound, and act—and jot down notes for later use.

- Each group must also be clear on where and when the act takes place, so the students should jot down their thoughts on background scenery, furniture, and props.

WRITING

- When students in each group are ready to move on to the actual drafting stage, let them figure out how multiple authors can work together. Review with them, if necessary, the mechanics of listing characters and of writing stage directions and dialogue.

- Advise students to follow their prewriting notes to unfold the scene: introducing characters and the problem, building suspense, and winding up with a historically accurate or believable ending. Students should, however, be free to abandon prewriting notes that may take them to dead ends—and rethink their act.

- Rather than let an act simply peter out, remind students that the audience needs to know what each character is doing and feeling—or at least what each character's situation is—at the end of the act.

- If they have not done so earlier, students should now title their act.

REVISING AND EDITING

Share with students a checklist such as the following, giving them time to revise as necessary so that they can answer "yes" to all the questions:

- Does the dialogue or do the stage directions clearly show the character(s) facing a conflict, lead up to a conclusion, and always include characters' reactions?

- Is the dialogue realistic and easy for an actor to say?

- Have the writers and editors checked to see that matters such as agreement, comparison, and pronoun references are correct?

9. Ask each group to perform, or at least read, its act for the rest of the class.

ADAPTATIONS:

During the prewriting phase, help students warm up by asking them to do freewriting from the point of view of one of the characters.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss how Milosevic's decision making was influenced by his wife and advisors. Who else was responsible for putting Milosevic in a position of power?

2. Analyze how Serbian television helped to create the "Milosevic myth."

3. Explain the quote, "offense is the best defense," and how it relates to events in Yugoslavia prior to the outbreak of civil war.

4. Compare and contrast the leadership styles of Slobodan Milosevic and Milan Kucan. Discuss their strengths and weaknesses as leaders.

5. Analyze the decision by Slovenia and Croatia to withdraw from the Yugoslav Republic. Discuss possible alternatives.

6. Analyze the causes of the Yugoslav crisis from the different points of view of those who were involved.

EVALUATION:

You can evaluate each group's historical drama using the following three-point rubric:

Three points: inclusion of historically accurate elements; well-formulated story line with conflict and outcome; smooth, realistic dialogue and clear stage directions

Two points: some basis in historical fact; inadequately developed story line; some unrealistic dialogue and incomplete stage directions

One point: absence of historical accuracy; inadequate outcome to conflict examined in the act; unrealistic dialogue and incomplete stage directions

EXTENSION:

The Cultures of Yugoslavia
The former Yugoslavia is home to different ethnic groups. The ethnic differences have caused tension, distrust, and bloodshed. Ask students to establish just how different the groups are. Have each student choose two of the following ethnic groups: Serbs, Croats, Bosnian Muslims, Slovenes, Macedonians, and Montenegrins. For each group, students should research the religion, language, history, and customs and then present their findings on a chart.

Charting the Sides
Have students create a pie graph with percentages of the population of Yugoslavia by ethnic group before the breakup of Yugoslavia. Ask students to comment on ethnic conflict, based on the graph.

Whose War?
Direct students to investigate the role of U.N. peacekeepers in the former Yugoslavia. Ask for volunteers to debate whether other countries have an obligation to intervene in this region of the world.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia
Tim Judah. Yale University Press, 1997.
In this first book from Tim Judah, which received high critical regard, the London journalist draws upon his experience of having lived in Belgrade during the Yugoslavian Civil War to report to *The Times of London* and *The Economist*. One of the most comprehensive recent accounts of the disintegration of Yugoslavia due to its civil war.

Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers—America's Last Ambassador Tells What Happened and Why
Warren Zimmerman. Time Books, 1996.
The former ambassador draws upon his eyewitness experiences of the disintegration of Yugoslavia during his tenure in Belgrade from 1989 to 1992. He pointedly assigns blame for the civil war to two ruthless leaders, Rudjman (Croatia) and Milosevic (Serbia), rather than to the will of the general Yugoslav populace.

WEB LINKS:

CNN: Mission Peace
CNN's extensive coverage of the Balkans.
http://cnn.com/WORLD/Bosnia/index.html

Bosnia Page at Caltech
Cal Tech members have developed the definitive Bosnia page.
http://www.cco.caltech.edu/~bosnia/bosnia.html

One World's Bosnia Page
A summary of events in Bosnia from a human rights perspective.
http://www.oneworld.org/news/archives/BA.html

This Week in Bosnia-Hercegovina
The Bosnia Action Coalition posts this newsletter online.
http://world.std.com/~slm/

Defenselink
The U.S. Government/Dept. of Defense information source on Bosnia.
http://www.dtic.mil/bosnia/

VOCABULARY:

communist
Characteristic of a system of government based on collective ownership of property.
Context:
In 1980, Tito made his final journey through communist Yugoslavia, the country he had created.

nationalism
A sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations.
Context:
For 35 years, Tito held Yugoslavia's six republics together with an iron hand. Any hint of nationalism from Serbs, Croats, Muslims, Macedonians, or Slovenes was crushed.

ethnic
Relating to large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background.
Context:
Seven years after Tito's death, Yugoslavia was still united. Tito's heirs kept ethnic hatreds buried.

separatist
An advocate of racial or cultural separation.
Context:
Milosevic and his supporters expected trouble from the Kosovo separatists.

treason
The offense of attempting by overt acts to overthrow the government of the state to which the offender owes allegiance.
Context:
Milan Kucan spoke to his people about defending the Kosovo Albanians and a united Yugoslavia. To a Serb, this was Slovene treason.

amendment
An alteration or correction.
Context:
The Slovene delegates wanted to present their case. They had a large number of amendments, and the Serbian delegates voted by raising their cards. Each amendment was voted down.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS:

Grade Level: 9-12
Subject Area: geography

Standard: Understands the forces of cooperation and conflict that shape the division of Earth's surface.

Benchmark: Knows the causes of boundary conflicts and internal disputes between culture groups.

Grade Level: 9-12
Subject Area: behavioral studies

Standard: Understands conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions.

Benchmarks:
Understands that conflict between people or groups may arise from competition over ideas, resources, power, and/or status.

Understands that some informal ways of responding to conflict may reduce tensions and lead to compromise but may be inflammatory and make agreement more difficult.

Grade Level: 9-12
Subject Area: world history

Standard: Understands the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world.

Benchmark: Understands the role of political ideology, religion, and ethnicity in shaping modern governments.

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Video Information and Comprehension Questions

Video Description
Violence, murder, and disorder in the former Yugoslavia have horrified the world. Learn how this once-unified country disintegrated into a combat zone of warring factions, and meet the man responsible: Serbian Communist Party leader Slobodan Milosevic.

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Download Comprehension Questions & Answers

The Comprehension Questions are available to download as an RTF file. You can save the file to your desktop and open it in a word processing program.

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TITLE OF VIDEO:
Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation

VIDEO COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

1. Where was Slobodan Milosevic sent in 1987 to calm a brewing ethnic conflict?

2. Why did King Lazar lead the Serb army into battle in 1389?

3. How did the provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo use their right of self-government?

4. What republic was Serbia's ally?

5. What power did the Party Council give to Milosevic?

6. Why did a plan to put the Mladina journalists on trial backfire?

7. How did Milan Kucan change the Slovene constitution?

8. Who was Slovenia's ally?

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Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation

VIDEO COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1. Where was Slobodan Milosevic sent in 1987 to calm a brewing ethnic conflict?
Slobodan Milosevic visited Kosovo as a result of rising ethnic conflict between ethnic Albanians and nationalist Serbs.

2. Why did King Lazar lead the Serb army into battle in 1389?
In 1389, King Lazar led the Serb army into battle to try to halt the advance of Islam.

3. How did the provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo use their right of self-government?
The provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo could use their vote to gang up with the northern republics of Slovenia and Croatia against Serbia.

4. What republic was Serbia's ally?
The republic of Montenegro was closely allied with Serbia.

5. What power did the Party Council give to Milosevic?
The party council gave Milosevic the power to use the Yugoslav army in Kosovo.

6. Why did a plan to put the Mladina journalists on trial backfire?
The plan backfired because it turned into an anti-army and anti-Yugoslav campaign.

7. How did Milan Kucan change the Slovene constitution?
Kucan changed the Slovene constitution to keep Belgrade out of its affairs.

8. Who was Slovenia's ally?
Slovenia's ally was its neighboring country, Croatia.

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